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SUBJECT: AUC'S SOUTHWESTERN ANTIOQUIA BLOC DEMOBILIZES

Summary

1. (U) The 126 members of the Self Defense Forces of Southwestern Antioquia demobilized on January 30, bringing the total number of the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC) members to have demobilized since December 2003 to 4,699. Senior paramilitary commanders Salvatore Mancuso and Ernesto Baez represented the AUC, Peace Commissioner Restrepo spoke on behalf of the GOC, and local government, church, police, and OAS officials attended. The bloc operated in the foothills of the Antioquia-Choco border. The FARC operate in the western part of these mountains. Several measures have been taken to prevent FARC incursions, including a permanent police station in the rural district where the bloc demobilized. Six bloc members, including the two commanders, were implicated in serious crimes and directed to go to the concentration zone in Santa Fe de Ralito, Cordoba Department. One of the commanders, "Rene," did not even leave Ralito to attend the event because he is wanted for involvement in the 1997 Mapiripan massacre. The bloc turned in about 100 guns and almost 200 grenades, most of which were old. The vast majority of the bloc members were from Antioquia. End Summary.

Second Bloc to Demobilize in 2005

2. (U) On January 30, 126 members (122 men and four women) of the Self Defense Forces of Southwestern Antioquia demobilized in a public event in a specially designated zone approximately three hours from the city of Medellin. As usual, senior paramilitary commanders Salvatore Mancuso and Ernesto Baez represented the AUC. Baez read a note from the bloc commander, alias "Rene," who could not leave the concentration zone in Santa Fe de Ralito because he is wanted for involvement in the 1997 Mapiripan massacre in Meta Department. Peace Commissioner Restrepo spoke on behalf of the GOC, and local government, church, police, and OAS officials attended.

3. (U) The demobilization took place in a school in the rural district of Alfonso Lopez, in the municipality of Ciudad Bolivar. The demobilization zone will last until February 15. By that time, all paramilitaries must have left and reported to a Reference and Orientation Center (CRO). The bloc operated in the foothills along the Antioquia-Choco border. The FARC have a presence in the western parts of these mountains, but had been blocked from southwest Antioquia, including from the Cali-Medellin highway, by the paramilitaries. In order to prevent FARC incursions into the former AUC territory, the police have a permanent station in the urban center of the rural district. The GOC installed a new communications antenna, and the Governor of Antioquia offered to match any new vehicle that the national government provided to the police or military in the area. Restrepo praised the police for their commitment to protecting the region.

Old Weapons and Antioquia Natives

4. (U) Unlike other demobilized blocs, the Southwestern Antioquia group turned in old weapons. The OAS and a government interagency group comprised of several security forces and run by the Department of Administrative Security (DAS, rough FBI equivalent) inventoried the weapons. They will be stored on an Army base in Medellin. According to the OAS, the group turned in 66 rifles, 16 revolvers, 7 pistols, 168 grenades, four mortars, and 34 radios.

5. (C) During the concentration, 124 bloc members took a demographic survey; were issued Reincorporation Program IDs; signed individual renunciations of AUC membership; were entered into the tracking and monitoring system; had their national identification cards ("cedulas") verified, replaced, or newly issued; and were given their first monthly reincorporation stipend of about USD 150 plus an additional USD 60 for relocation costs. The bloc's two commanders did not go through this process. Rene, the senior commander, did not attend the demobilization because of his active arrest warrant. The other commander, Juan Gonzalez, attended the

event but reportedly returned directly to Ralito because he was implicated in serious crimes. Four other bloc members were implicated in serious crimes, including one woman for homicide, and directed to go to Ralito on government provided transportation.

16. (U) One-hundred eighteen bloc members were from Antioquia. Of these, 107 will report to the CRO in Medellin and 11 to the CRO in Turbo to continue the reinsertion process. The remaining six were from elsewhere in Colombia.

17. (U) This is the second AUC demobilization in 2005. The first involved 925 members of the Northern Bloc in Cordoba Department. This brings the total demobilized to 4,699 since December 2003. The next demobilization of approximately 100 members of the Self Defense Forces of La Mojana is tentatively scheduled for February 2.

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